

Message Text

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70

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMCONSUL FUKUOKA

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO JA

INFO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 400

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

MCAS IWAKUNI JA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD 1ST MAW

E.O. 11652: N/A CINCPAC FOR POLAD 1SST MAW

TAGS: PINT: MILI: JA

SUBJ: DEPLOYMENT OF AV-8A SQUADRON TO MCAS IWAKUNI

SUMMARY: REPLACEMENT OF 18 A4E SKYHAWKS BY AV-8A HARRIER SQUADRON AT MCAS IWAKUNI (VMA 513) RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN LOCAL PAPERS AND REGIONAL EDITION OF NATIONAL PAPERS. LOCAL LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS, NOTABLE GENSUIKYO AND BEHEIREN, HAVE PREDICTABLY ARGUED THAT DEPLOYMENT OF AV-8A'S TO IWAKUNI WILL CAUSE NOISE PROBLEMS AND REPRESENT ACTUAL REINFORCEMENT OF BASE. HOWEVER, BOTH MCAS AND 1ST MAW HAVE

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CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE BRIEFINGS OF LOCAL OFFICIALS TO REASSURE THEM ON NOISE AND REDEPLOYMENT SEEMS TO BE PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. END SUMMARY.

NEW SQUADRON OF AV-8A'S ARRIVED ON BOARD USS TRIPOLI FROM U.S. AUGUST 13 AND WERE FLOWN TO MCAS IWAKUNI SAME DAY. DEPLOYMENT RECEIVED

EXTENSIVE COVERAGE AUGUST 13 IN LOCAL NISHI NIHON SHIMBUN, AS WELL AS REGIONAL EDITIONS OF YOMIURI, ASAHI, AND MAINICHI. FOCUS OF ARTICLES WAS ASSERTION BY LEFTIST GROUPS THAT DEPLOYMENT REPRESENTED STRENGTHENING

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OF MARINES AT IWAKUNI AND WOULD CAUSE NOISE PROBLEMS. LOCAL CHAPTER OF

BEHEIREN HUNG LARGE BANNER OPPOSING DEPLOYMENT ON SEAWALL ADJACENT TO BASE, AND IWAKUNI CITY PRESIDENT OF JCP-AFFILIATED GENSUIKYO VISITED IWAKUNI MAYOR SHUNSUKE ASAEDA AND DEMANDED THAT MAYOR NOT ATTEND DEMONSTRATION OF AIRCRAFT AND BRIEFINGS MCAS AND WING HAD PLANNED. MAYOR, WHO HAS ALWAYS STRUCK US AS NON-POLEMICAL TYPE WHO WALKS LINE BETWEEN SATISFYING LEFTISTS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE WHILE MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH MARINES, WENT ANYWAY, ALTHOUGH HE PROMISED HE WOULD KEEP CLOSE EYE ON NOISE PROBLEM.

YOMIURI COMMENTED THAT DEPLOYMENT ADDED TO PERMANENCY OF BASE AND SAID THAT OF VARIOUS AMERICAN BASES IN JAPAN, ONLY IWAKUNI HAS ACTUALLY

BEEN REINFORCED. PAPER CITED ESTABLISHMENT OF NOISE SUPPRESSORS AND

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REMODELLING OF BARRACKS AS PROOF OF THEIR ASSERTION. YOMIURI WENT ON TO QUOTE TOKYO MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR HIROSHI OSANAI AS SAYING WHAT HE TERMED REINFORCEMENT OF IWAKUNI WOULD MAKE RELATIONS WITH USSR AND CHINA MORE SENSITIVE. PAPER ENDED BY SAYING DEPLOYMENT WOULD GIVE IMPETUS TO MOVEMENT AMONG LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS TO HAVE BASE REMOVED.

COMMENT: WHILE YOMIURI'S ASSESSMENT THAT LEFTIST ORGANIZATION'S DRIVE TO HAVE BASE REMOVED IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN SHORT-RANGE, WE BELIEVE THAT IN LONG RANGE, DEPLOYMENT WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT, AV-8A'S ARE ACTUALLY SOMEWHAT QUIETER THAN A4ES, AND MCAS AND WING HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO POINT THIS OUT. AFTER FIRST FLURRY OF PRESS COVERAGE, THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING MORE IN NEWSPAPERS, AND WE THINK, AT LEAST FOR PRESENT, ISSUE IS MORE OR LESS A DEAD ONE. END COMMENT

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